# THE CHAPLAIN AS PROCLAIMER FROM A BLACK PERSPECTIVE

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"THE CHAPLAIN AS PROCLAIMER -
FROM A BLACK PERSPECTIVE"

I. INTRODUCTION

When one is called to be a proclaimer his choices become very limited. He must simply decide to accept or reject his call in its entirety. If he accepts, his task is implied.

I see our role as chaplains as mainly that of proclaimers of the message of God's redeeming love in all areas of life. Today, I see this role threatened as we try to become professional experts in many areas. We reach toward a new goal, that of becoming a limited kind of psychologist or clinical psychoanalysist. In this struggle we are attacking the results of the problem we face refusing to acknowledge the source of the sickness, and thus finding ourselves unable to recognize and attack its roots. Perhaps we have lost touch with the true reality of God's Word that identifies our sin problem. Perhaps we prefer the applause of our peer group to the thrill of answering God's call with honesty, exuberance and the enthusiasm born of the trial of our faith. Now perhaps, it is time to raise a valid question - why not perfect our abilities as proclaimers or preachers?

Where can we look for help in perfecting this talent? I suggest we look carefully at the role of Black preaching.

John A. Blackwell said, "...since the pulpit is sagging universally, Black preaching can be the shot in the arm needed to assist in effectively driving home the gospel of Jesus Christ."[1]

My limited experience, seven(7) plus years, in the military chaplaincy tells me that White Anglo-Saxon Protestant faith usually opposes the validity of this method of proclaiming the message of God's love. Why? Basically because it threatens the status-quo which has been accepted as a non-involved methodology of proclaiming the message. If there is an area of ministry in which preaching is failing today, it is the military chaplaincy. This may sound like a strong indictment and it is, but we cannot close our eyes to this reality. Ch Pearson,in an article in the Military Chaplain's Review stated, "...twenty-six(26) percent of the worshipping Black soldiers preferred to worship on post; seventy-four(74) percent preferred to worship off-post."[2]

He suggested the following reason: "...they experience a sense of alienation...in the military chapel."[3]

In order to show a comparison between Blacks and Whites in attendance in post chapel, he said, "...five

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[1]John A. Blackwell, "Black Preaching," The Princeton Seminary Bulletin 65 (July 1972) : 42.

[2]John C. Pearson, "The Black Experience in the Military Chapel," Military Chaplains' Review Insight (Winter, 1975) : 28.

[3]Ibid., p. 28.

percent more whites than blacks preferred to worship on post..."[4]

This means only thirty-one(31) percent of our military worshipping group prefer worshipping in the military chapel. I concur with Chaplain Pearson's rationale for the low percent of Blacks responding, however, I believe there is a more basic reason for their lack of attendance, and this has to do with the type of detached, almost lethargic preaching which often takes place in the military chapel.

The purpose of this paper is not to be defensive in its content, but to present what I consider an unexplored option that is available to the military chaplain.

I believe inherent in the history of Black preaching today's proclaimer may find a workable solution to this problem of being identified or called a weak proclaimer of the faith.

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[4] Ibid., p. 28.

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLACK PREACHING

The purpose of this section of my research is not to try and include all the great and outstanding Black preachers which comprise our Black heritage, but rather to illustrate what a rich heritage we (meaning Black and White proclaimers of the faith) have available to us.

This survey will cover only the 18th and 19th centuries. There are two reason for not touching on the great men in the 20th century:

1) Their contributions are still being made.

2) The list is much too long for the purpose of this project.

The dates presented will not indicate the life-span of the preachers, except in a few cases which will be obvious by the time period used, but will indicate time-periods of their ministries.

As one scans this survey the meaning of what Dr. Mitchell said, "...the preaching tradition of the Black Fathers did not spring into existence suddenly",[5] will become very obvious.

Many of the early Black preachers preached more to white congregations than to blacks, for example Lemuel Haynes,

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[5]Henry H. Mitchell, Black Preaching (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1970), p. 65.

**Henry Evans**, and Rev. Andrew Marshall. Why was this true and how did it happen? Here are four possible solutions to these questions:

> 1) ...in the beginning, the number of blacks who understood, or were permitted to hear, Christian preaching was relatively limited.
> 2) Another was that many of the slave masters still held the humanity of Blacks under convenient suspicion, not being willing to raise them above the level of animal property and concede them souls in need of saving in the first place.
> 3) Still another factor was that, from the very beginning of slavery, the slaveholders understood very clearly what they were and how evil it was.
> 4) A final factor explaining the White audiences may have been that the Black preachers offered from the first not only novelty, but real talent and power.[6]

## A SURVEY OF BLACK PREACHERS

You will find a special page of footnotes preceeding the regular bibliography on page 29 indicating the sources of this survey.

1737-1812 - Andrew Bryan of Georgia was the founder of the First African Baptist Church of Savannah.[1]

1743-1763 - Harry Hoosier and Andrew were teachers in a school in Charleston to train blacks for missionary work among their fellows.[2]

1753-1833 - Lemuel Haynes, a mulatto of learning and eloquence who through all of his ministry pastored only white congregation churches in New England. He was quite a theologian, and debated with power the theological issues of his time.[3]

1784-1810 - Black Harry (Harry Hoosier), servant and companion of Bishop Asbury and reputed by some to be the greatest orator in America.

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[6] Ibid., pp 67-69.

Bishop Coke wrote, 'I have now had the pleasure of hearing Harry preach several times. I sometimes give notice immediately after preaching, that in a little while he will preach to the blacks; but the whites always stay to hear him...'[4]

1773 - George Leile, of Burke County, Georgia, an eloquent preacher to blacks and whites;[5] ...was instrumental in founding or continuing the First African Baptist Church of Savannah, which may have been meeting regularly as early as 1773....when the Britich finaly evacuated Savannah in 1783, Leile went with them to Jamaica to protect himself from a return to slavery, and thus became the first 'foreign missionary from the United States.'[6]

1775 - David George, preacher of the first Negro Baptist Church at Silver Bluff, South Caroline.[7]

1786 - Richard Allen - father of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, did his earliest preaching to audiences largely white. In fact, he indicates that he turned from over two years of lay preaching and odd-jobbing among whites to try to reach his black brothers only after he had moved to Philadelphia in 1786.[8]

1790 - Henry Evans, organizer of the White Methodist Church at Fayetteville, North Carolina.[9]

1793 - Allen Absalom Jones - active in relief work in an epidemic which swept Philadelphia.[10]

1812-1856 - The Rev. Andrew Marshall, pastor of First African Baptist Church at Savannah...had the distinction, before being called to this church, of being the missionary for the largely white Sunbury Baptist Association of Georgia.[11]

1815-1882 - Henry Highland Garnet...included in his busy life several Presbyterian pastorates, the presidency of Avery College, and a brief term as minister to Liberia.[12]

1831 - Nat Turner...who led the bloody revolt was a Baptist exhorter.[13]

1852-1896 - Daniel A. Payne, Bishop of A.M.E. Church.[14]

1857-1877 - William J. Campbell pastor of First African Baptist Church of Savannah after Andrew C. Marshall.[15]

1868-1896 - Bishop J.M. Brown was a prep-school graduate from Massachusetts, with private tutoring in Latin and Greek and very nearly four years at Oberlin.[16]

1878-1884 - Rev. George Gibbons, pastor of First African Baptist Church of Savannah, of whom it is said,...was called to the Bethlehem Baptist Church about 1875, and by his humble, refined and dignified bearing, won the love and esteem of his entire flock...[17]

1876 - Rev. H.H. Mitchell, a graduate of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania....president of Black Baptists in Virginia in the 1890's, is remembered as the preacher who put a gun out of every window in his church to protect a Black man and his wife from lynching.[18]

1878-1937 - Francis J. Grimké pastor of the Fifteenth Street Baptist Church of Washington, D.C.[19]

1885-1900 - Dr. E.K. Love, the first pastor of the First African Baptist Church to have a college degree; he served from 1885-1900. A graduate of what is now Morehouse College, he represents the first wave of men trained in denominational schools...the first president of National Baptists...Dr. Love is also an excellent example of the kind of leadership which Black preachers gave during this period, when they combined the insights of their training with the still-strong influences of their culture and identity as Blacks. The Church's history says of him: 'Dr. Love was also a successful social and political leader. For years, his influence was the greatest single political force in Savannah. He made and unmade mayors and

alderman, greatly influencing the administration of the city. He was also a prominent figure in state and national Republican Conventions...he was also a vigorous writer.[20]

1880 - Dr. James Poindexter, remembered not only for his great spiritual leadership, but for his distinction as the first Black city Councilman in Columbus, and a school-board member back in the 1880's.[21]

1885- - C.A. Tindley, completely self-educated, was ordained in the Methodist Church in 1885, serving what is known as the Tindley A.M.E. Church from 1902 to the time of his death more than 30 years later. He will live in print in the Black churches for many generations to come, but it will be for the hymns he wrote and not the sermons. Included, "Leave it There", and We'll Understand it better by and by."[22]

Under the leadership of these and many other Black preachers the "...Black churches grew by leaps and bounds because they offered a warm fellowship in a cold, hostile world, and because there had already developed in the early churches a powerful Black preaching tradition."[7]

How does one account for this, since education and opportunity were so limited to these men? There are many factors which can not be described in words, but consider the following statements as possible explanations of the 'how':

1) ...African culture influenced all black preachers to use a musical and pleasing voice, with or without 'moaning' or 'chanting'.
2) Without the schooling the Black preachers learned the reality of 'God can teach me by His Spirit to understand

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[7] Ibid., p. 72.

His Word.' This is important because it shows that '... God did bypass white academic structures and give America a Black religious input of unique warmth and relevance.'[8]

3) ...Preaching was an outlet for leadership ability. It was one position of leadership permitted Negroes and the office carried considerable prestige. It did much to keep aspiration alive among gifted Negro men.
4) ...The Negro preacher was able to communicate religion to the slave in a useful and intimate form. Being one of the people and suffering with them, he could make religion not only a discipline, but also a living ground of hope.
5) ...the church served as the main outlet through which the slaves could express sufferings and dissatisfaction. Although it was done covertly, the church rendered two great needed services to the slaves: First, it kept alive the consciousness that the slave system was wicked; and second, it kept alive the hope that in the plan of a good, just God, the wicked, brutal system under which they lived would have to pass away.[9]

Thus we recognize, that within the Black experience lies a heritage of exceptional talent in the area of preachers. Surely, there must be more to preaching than merely a gift to spout one's opinion. Surely, the call of God upon a man's life, stamps him forever as one of a chosen breed of proclaimers, regardless of race, and such men, wherever they may be found, stand head and shoulders above their brothers who dare to occupy a pulpit without the seal of God's holy call upon their lives.

Therefore, I submit that over and beyond natural ability and educational opportunity one, must have the faith in his message that produces the vibrancy only found in those who have received this special call from the Master.

[8] Ibid., pp. 72 & 77)

[9] Davis, John P. The Negro In American Religious Life," The American Negro Reference Book, 1966, pp. 400-401.

III. WHAT IS BLACK PREACHING?

In order to answer this question we must deal with the Black preacher himself. Of this individual in the American culture it can be said,

"For one to behold this man is to behold a miracle."[10]

The Black preacher is a miracle because he was and

> ...is the one who fills the gap between the sacred and secular; he it is who sings and speaks about a God who saves by grace and not by race. He it is who has found a meaningful existence in the face of the threat of non-existence and non-being. He it is who represents the masses who was hidden among the bulrushes of the ghettoes, whose skin was a badge of hatred, yet who stands under the wings of the Almighty God. He it is who stands there as a 'motherless child' with whom each person listening, identifies.[11]

In an attempt to further identify the Black preacher, C.D. Coleman said,

> ...moving across the pages of history almost unnoticed by historians, was one of the most colorful and dynamic figures ever to illuminate American folklore. Alternately revered and ridiculed, this renownless hero prototyped a noble and gifted breed - the 'Black preacher.'

The Black preacher is a

> man of God by calling - but often teacher, healer, carpenter, and undertaker by necessity...he took down the mutilated bodies of Black men after the mobs had done their worst...he who represented Black people to a hostile white community in times of deep trouble. He did this, not for pay, not for glory, but only to serve. He made life a little less tedious and the hard journey a little less arduous...he knew fear and loneliness, pain and trouble as intimately and as often as any of his flock; but from his lips always fell words of comfort and reassurance...he was often without honor, but never without integrity. He was a poet - his sermons compare

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[10] Blackwell, op. cit., p. 37.

[11] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[12] Johnson, Joseph A, Jr., The Soul of The Black Preacher. (Philadephia: A Pilgrim Press Board, 1971), p. 11.

> with the finest prose and poetry. The wonderful creativity behind his preaching created the scene out of which spirituals were born. He was a philosopher - out of his soul came forth profound spiritual insights. He was an orator - his words held his audiences spellbound. He was a prophet - always declaring 'a better day is coming'. This is the tradition of the black preacher. This is his call - and to this calling he bares his soul.'[13]

What is Black preaching? It is "dialogue"[14]

This means there must be stimulator or initiator of the dialogue and that is the Black preacher in the preaching event of the religious worship experience. Here the congregation and the preacher must feel free to speak to each other in their experience of worship.

I do not mean dialogue of the kind that most seminaries were introduced to in the early 1960's as a new method to relate the message of Jesus Christ. This type of dialogue preaching was basically planned by the preacher by having certain people in the congregation raise questions at given points of time during the presentation of the sermon. This is not what I call dialogue preaching from a black perspective. Dialogue preaching is preaching in which and/or by which the congregation spontaneously speaks back to the preacher when he has stimulated the response. If the preacher does not stimulate anything in the worshipper, he will receive nothing in response. Any sermon that elicits no

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[13]Ibid., pp. 11-12.
[14]Mitchell, op. cit., p. 95.

response is not black preaching.

C. Eric Lincoln said,

> Black preaching has always assumed that preaching must be an experience, not merely a clever idea. It involves the totality of a person and is, consciously or not, concerned to organize feeling tones around the text.[15]
>
> Black preaching, in the best of all its traditional strands, still assumes that God Himself speaks through men who give themselves to Him in prayer and sincere preparation for the preaching event.[16]
>
> ...No amount of professional preparation must ever be allowed to put social distance between the shepherd and the sheep. In preaching, this has far-reaching implications as to language, culture, imagery, and so on.[17]

But Black preaching is more than dialogue, it is also "contagious".[18] This is best illustrated by what happens when a person has a contagious disease. The disease can only be passed on by direct contact with either the infected individual or some item which has been used by that infected individual. So it is, that when the preacher has something to tell, a message to share, a conviction to convey that speaks to the hearts and life-situation of the people, they respond with suitable interjections, without which the preacher is quickly made aware that he is not reaching anyone. Here is one of the truly unique aspects of Black preaching - the congregation talks back to the preacher as a valid or

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[15]Lincoln, C. Eric, The Black Experience In Religion (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974), p. 73. [16]Ibid., p. 74. [17]Ibid., p. 74.

[18]Mitchell, op. cit., p. 109.

authentic part of the experience in worship.

> As the words are communicated to the group, very little time elapses before there is a noted change in the form and nature of the group gathered. A change which E. Franklin Frazier identifies as the 'invisible church.'[19]

I submit that it is more than the 'invisible church' it is the invisible church in action.

Olin P. Moyd captured this complete idea in the following words, "Authentic and wholesome black preaching is a 'happening' between preacher and congregation. It includes verbal and non-verbal responses on the part of the congregation...in the final analysis the preacher shapes the congregation and the congregation shapes the preacher."[20]

To the average black church goer, Black preaching is never an incident, but the incident of his Sunday. The congregation is expectant. They historically see the experience of worshipping as a vital and necessary link in their integration of soul with spirit. The appearance of the Black people at the church on Sunday morning or evening, may initially be out of habit, but once their preacher has established himself as a worthwhile representative of the black preacher's community, the congregation becomes totally involved in the entire worship experience, with special emphasis on the preaching. As they listen, time becomes an unimportant

[19]Blackwell, op. cit., p. 40.

[20]Moyd, Olin P. "Elements in Black Preaching," The Journal of Religious Thought, Mar 1973, pp. 53-54

element. They are getting what they came for, and the shouts of 'preach', 'amen', etc. encourages their minister.

This element of time in the Black worship experience is worthy of our consideration. Black tradition holds that the working of the Holy Spirit does not follow white clocks.[21] It takes time for the Holy Spirit to involve a congregation. It is not the Holy Spirit who needs the time, it is the congregation. The congregation must free itself from being controlled and governored by the concept of time and allow itself to be open and responsive to the moving of the Holy Spirit. I am reminded of the experience of the early disciples - they waited in the upper room for ten days. Why? Because they needed to free themselves so the Holy Spirit could come in and truly set them free.

Historically the black slave saw in the opportunity of public worship the one chance for an expression of true freedom. So when he went to church, he was free. And naturally he was in no hurry to give up this freedom even if it was a temporary experience. Hence the length of the service had more relevance the longer it lasted. Another important aspect of this is that in black worship no one looks

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[21]Mitchell, op. cit., p. 107.

on, but all participate. This involvement is in depth. Here, the worshipper is considered worthy to participate. Time spent in worship is not forced but enjoyed.

Another reason for the importance of time, is that there is, for the Black preacher a sense of timing as he preaches the Word. The average black sermon will last between 35-45 minutes, because the very style of Black preaching follows a given pattern. This is seen in the following statement.

> It builds toward an emotional pitch and climax that are made possible by the minister's sense of timing and dynamics. The delivery of the message is best described by what the minister does with his voice, intonation, and pitch, dynamics and rhythm, movement and timing.[22]

The music also adds a dimension within the context of a sense of timing, that ought to be over looked. I often remember hearing my minister father as he stood to preach after a gospel choir had sung some soul stirring song or after a deacon had led the congregation in a moving spiritual, "Well, if a preacher can't preach now, something is wrong with him."

Singing has always been an inherent part of all Black experiences with few exceptions. Black gospel music typifies the freedom that is desired both for the here and now, and eternity. Often, the past is recorded in song with

[22]Lincoln, op. cit., p. 77.

considerable nostalgia. Historically, Blacks escape the anxiety of physical pain which came from over work, simply by singing. This experience was carried over into the worship experience. When they sing songs like, "Soon I'll Be Done with the Trouble of this world," "Nobody knows the trouble I see","Go Down Moses", "Honey in the Rock (Rock symbolizing Jesus)", and "I gotta robe, you gotta robe, all God's Children gotta robe", these songs speak to them in the words of encouragement they need. The singing satisfied a deep soul-hunger, and when the hunger is filled, they say with Mrs. Parks, "My feet are tired but my soul is rested."

Again time is of no significance as the song moves along. Repetition drives home the meaning of the words. The congregation again becomes involved in the meaning beyond the words. Many Black congregations have shortened this type of singing, but they still prefer a song that repeats the heart of the message till it comes a part of the consciousness of the hearers.

IV. THE NATURE AND STYLE OF BLACK PREACHING

In describing the nature of Black preaching, I want to submit the outline as presented by Blackwell when he says, "There are five basic observations seen when one considers Black preaching."[23]

Let's look at these five basic observations in an illustrative way. First, double memorization. This maybe seen in the way the Black preacher has been able to help his people see that just as Jesus Christ redeemed them spiritually, so in Abraham Lincoln they saw him as their political redeemer from physical slavery.

Second, double dialogue and identification. Through this method the Black preacher employs some phrase usually poetic with which he knows his audience can readily identify as he chants the words such as "Nobody knows the trouble, I see, oh the trouble I've seen," to which the audience responds "nobody knows," and "the trouble I've seen."

Third, double vision. The Black preacher always does something for his congregation that many others overlook. He tells them not only of the past, their sorrows, pains, etc., but always, with eloquence and vision into

[23]Blackwell, op. cit., p. 39.

their lives, he stresses the good in their present circumstance, thus lifting their spirits as he raises their Ebenezer. This looking back and recognizing the present for what it is is what Blackwell calls 'double vision' and is an integral part of most black sermons.

Fourth, double freedom. By neutralizing the plight of his congregation whatever the plight may happen to be at that time, with the promises of God, the Black preacher is doing his important work. The political and social strangulation is dealt with adequately in many black pulpits, by the process of neutralization through recognition of where God's real approval lies. The sufferings of a scorned Christ who ultimately triumphed over death becomes a towel of strength.

Fifth, double consciousness. The other freeing process is that of freeing them from self hate - a problem that we have discovered plagues peoples of all races. In acceptance of himself as exactly what he is, and in enthusiastically enjoying this lot, he frees his people to enjoy themselves as they are created by a God who loves them.

Let us now look at some of the styles inherent in

Black preaching. Styles are so personal, that there are as many styles as there are Black preachers. Let us look at two great Black preachers: The Late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dr. Sandy Ray. Hortense J. Spillers has analyzed Dr. King's sermons and Olin P. Moyd has analyzed Dr. Rays'. I believe we will see common areas of style that can be observered in any Black preaching. By style I mean "... the way in which manner, methods, tones, and feelings are judiciously appropriated in preaching."[24]

Dr. King had grown up in the Southern tradition of Black preaching. His pulpit style was "poetic in texture and traditional in delivery."[25] His preaching was always an "appeal...to the emotions-one's love of inspiration, one's sense of triumph over disaster."[26]

"In King, the rhetorical style as he learned it in the academics met the poetic style of his fathers as he experienced it in the South."[27] This is one of the unique aspects of black preaching. Schooling or training must be related directly to the life situation experience. When King combined "modification (adjectiveness) and nominality...he was able...to create a picturesqueness and grandness of speech that were his hallmark."[28]

[24]Moyd, op. cit., p. 53. [25]Lincoln, op. cit., p. 76.
[26]Ibid., p. 78. [27]Ibid., p. 80. [28]Ibid., p. 80.

Spillers says, "...this particular feature (adjectiveness and nouness) in all its variations is at the heart of King's metaphors - the dominent poetic quality of his message."[29] That in itself, if masterfully done, is a poetic joy.

Another style is that of "repetition and amplification...In many cases, the preacher's own words are echoed and verified by his audience, thus making the word more emphatic."[30]

This is what I call the invincible church in action. It has historically been called the "the amen corner." Here, the worshippers "...support and sustain the preacher by repeating certain of his own words or their own exclamation."[31]

King's use of this

> technique was more attributable to his sense of euphony and resonance than to gesture and movement. King often brought together words that ended in the same sound to create a thing of rhythm and cadence.[32]

Let me refer to one last outstanding style of Dr. King. King had a vivid imagination. Using rhythm and tempo, repetition and amplification and contrasts and opposites in telling "...an old familiar story, the story itself was enlivened to the extent of becoming life and blood..."[33] as his

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[29] Ibid., p. 80. [30] Ibid., p. 83.
[31] Ibid., p. 83. [32] Ibid., pp. 83-84. [33] Ibid., p. 84.

audience listened to him.

When one listens to Dr. Ray he will notice that in "telling the Bible story in the Black preaching tradition means becoming spiritually involved in the story on the part of the preachers."[34] At one point in the story "...he is a member of the cast in the drame..." but he able also "...to involve the audience in the drama of the story being related."[35]

For example when Dr. Ray tells the story of Peter walking on the water,

> he points out that the other disciples tried to restrain Peter and warned him of the impracticality of walking on water, but in the discussion Peter replied by saying that Jesus had called him, and when Jesus calls me there is something about the call that makes me impractical, and I'm walking.[36]

A second style is the use of rhetorical questions. In preaching on Paul, in one of his sermons, Dr. Ray said, "I wonder if Paul ever related his experience to the priesthood? I often wonder if he ever got a chance to tell his Damascus-Road experience to the priesthood?"[37]

Here he raises the same question twice. Between the first and second stating of the question there is a slight rest - a pause. This slight rest is intentional. It gives the audience time to think, to feel, and to respond.

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[34]Moyd, op. cit., p. 54. [35]Ibid., p. 54.
[36]Ibid., p. 55. [37]Ibid., p. 55.

> After profoundly raising the question, observing the rests necessary for audience involvement, Dr. Ray asserted that every time Paul got in close places he would relate the Damascus-Road experience. He declares that whenever Paul got into situations in which he could not explain quite what was happening to him, he would say, 'When I was on my way to Damascus.' At this point, he immediately applies the inference of the rehetorical question to the lives of the hearers.[38]

This is one of the methods he uses frequently, and he never loses his congregation nor allows them to go sleep.

Dr. Ray's method of repetition and rhythm are seen in the following account of Paul's ship wrecked journey. He had Paul telling the crew:

> You are not going to understand what
> I'm going to say now Paul says:
> For you don't understand this kind of language.
> You are earth bound, and
> Your knowledge is gadget concealed,
> Concerned,
> Mine is God concern.
> But I've got a message for you:
> During the storm
> During the wind
> During the gale
> The angel of the Lord
> Whose I am and whom I serve
> Stood by me this night.
> While thunders were rolling
> While lightenings were flashing
> While winds were blowing
> The angel of the Lord
> Whose I am and whom I serve
> Stood by me this night.
> Be of good cheer
> Sounds like a preacher
> Everything's going to be all right.
> Winds are blowing
> Ship leaking
> Storm raging
> But the preachers says
> Everything is going to be all right.

[38] Ibid., p. 56.

I have authentic information that our ship is doomed
But there will be no loss of life
Be of good cheer
For I believe God.[39]

Just one reading of this part of his sermon will show the style of repetition in the use of the words, "during," and "while." It is also seen in the phrases, "Whose I am" and "Whom I serve" and "Everything's going to be all right."

Rhythm maybe observed in the phrases: "during the storm", "while thunders were rolling", "winds are blowing," "ship leaking" and "storm rage."

Dr. Ray also uses the style of personal testimony.

> In a sermon dramatizing the Bible story of Jesus feeding the five thousand with the limited resource of the lunch of a lad...he told us that he was a school drop-out. He said the man for whom his family worked looked at him one day and told his father that he was too big to go school and that he, Sandy, should be working in the field. Then, while he was yet a young man God called him to preach and he said, "Lord, I haven't completed by education and I am not properly trained, but God told me:
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> Give me your lunch! (rest)
> Give me your life! (rest)
> Give me your heart! (rest)
> Give me your all.
> And you sit down and wait.
> And whatever you need,
> I will give it to you.
> You just give me what you have.
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> During this personal testimony the audience responded and participated in the sermon. Many of the hearers had had similar experiences and now they found out that the preacher, too, had experienced difficulties in his own life situation and was himself a living testament of a delivered child of God.[40]

The attempt in presenting some of the styles of these

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[39]Ibid., p. 57. [40]Ibid., p. 59.

two men was not with the purpose in mind of presenting all that is available in describing their styles, but rather just to show how the style of Black preaching is unique.

If some of these styles and others, are observable in other preachers, and I believe they are, the military chaplaincy as a whole has failed to incorporate them in the general worship experience.

## V. CONCLUSION - BLACK PREACHING IN A MILITARY CONTEXT

Black preaching "...appeals...to the emotions - one's love of inspiration, one's sense of triumph over disaster..."[41] In the military context our military chapels have been overly influenced by White Anglo-Saxon Protestantism which declares in the preaching event one's emotions must be denied covertly if not overtly. This preaching tradition has been so influenced by the European style, that it is hard to see the difference. The preaching event in Europe, generally speaking is that of a well defined lecture prepared and presented for intellectual digestion, a hope that is sometimes impossible. One's overt emotions are overlooked. Hortense J. Spillers has said in this regard,

> With the folk, the expression arises in spontaneity, springing from emotions. Though the expression may be learned and transmitted, its impulse is emotional and its rhythms joyful, festive, and triumphant; with the scholar, the expression is cerebral, prejudged, so to speak, springing from the intellect. The intellectual statement informs and clarifies, whereas the emotional statement, which may inform and clarify as well, certainly inspires and invigorates.[42]

In the above statement the writer was describing Dr. King's style and manner of combining the traditions of the folk and the scholar.

Furthermore Black preaching has traditionally dealt with social concerns or issues, and continues to do so today.

[41] Lincoln, op. cit., p. 78. [42] Ibid., p. 79.

By this I do not mean the social-gospel that was projected on the American scene several years ago. For this message was basically one of man pulling himself up by his own boot-straps in an effort to please God. What I mean is, dealing with life-situations which demonstrate social and political injustices to men because of their ethnic background. Please note

> The Black preacher has always been, historically, a beacon spirit to his people; he was the one who was most in touch with God, assuring his listeners that even though the business of life was a cross to bear, God himself was waiting in the wings of history to secure the safe passage of those who loved Him and did His will.[43]

The 'how' of the effect of Black preaching on the military chaplaincy may be seen in the follow ways:

1) During the basic and advance courses at USACHCS, leading Black preachers should be provided as lecturers and preachers during preaching clinics or oral preaching workshops.

2) At the various chapels on post, chaplains should be encouraged to bring in leading Black preachers in their particular community as guest speakers, evangelists, revival leaders, etc.

3) Preaching clinics should be encouraged and conducted on Army post, under the leadership of some of these

[43]Ibid., pp. 87-88.

outstanding proclaimers of the faith.

4) Chaplains should be encouraged to do what Ch Pearson suggested,

> ...cross-reading...arouse one's awareness of racism. By cross-reading the writer refers to a conservative who reads liberal publications, or a liberal who reads conservative publications, or a person of European extraction who read some Afro-American materials, or an Afro-American who reads European materials. But cross-reading is not accomplished until the reader, at least provisionally, accepts a point of view that is different from his own.[44]

5) We must re-examine our concept of time in the area of worship. When we do a job we get paid by the hour in our American culture and unfortunately we have allowed this idea to influence our concept of worship. The idea that giving God one hour on Sunday is sufficient is beyond the Black concept of worship. I say it is not sufficient time. Consider this, if we add thirty minutes, we would, with preachers who began to understand the dynamics of the total involvement that is a part of any great preaching and necessarily a part of Black preaching, find ourselves beginning to free our congregations for a more total worship experience themselves. Caged spirits do not break through in a structured hour. We need to re-examine our whole worship experience and ask ourselves why millions now refuse to enter a place of organized

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[44]Pearson, op. cit., p. 32.

religious worship. Could it be that they come looking for a spiritual release that they do not find either in our over-structured concept of worship, or in our uninvolved detachment as we lecture them? Certainly our styles need re-examination.

I believe if the military chaplaincy will note the nature, style, and the context of Black preaching, as well as its' historical background, it will discover that Black preaching can be "...the shot in the arm needed to assist in effectively driving home the gospel of Jesus Christ."[45]

Finally, if one has the techinques, this will not guarantee effectiveness if the preacher, proclaimer (chaplain) himself does not have the charismatic gift or power to use it appropriately.[46]

Perhaps, we need to give ourselves time to examine the depth of our own total involvement with Jesus Christ, for it is not easy to fake what one does not believe. Spiritual involvement must be our first goal.

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[45] Blackwell, op. cit., p. 42.
[46] Mitchell, op. cit., p. 179.

SPECIAL FOOTNOTE PAGE

1. Davis, John P. "The Negro In American Religious Life," The American Negro Reference Book, 1966, p. 400.
2. Mitchell, Henry H. Black Preaching. (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1970), p. 66.
3. Davis, op. cit., p. 400.
4. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 69.
5. Davis, op. cit., p. 400.
6. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 71.
7. Davis, op. cit., p. 400.
8. Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
9. Davis, op. cit., p. 400.
10. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 88.
11. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
12. Ibid., p. 89.
13. Davis, op. cit., p. 400.
14. Mitchell, op., cit., p. 79.
15. Ibid., p. 86.
16. Ibid., p. 85-86.
17. Ibid., p. 87.
18. Ibid., p. 91.
19. Ibid., p. 90.
20. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
21. Ibid., p. 91.
22. Ibid., p. 94.

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